



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Deuteronomy 28:63-68

"Calendar of Future Events – Part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight our subject, as we draw near the end of our basic Bible doctrine is, "A Calendar of Future Events." We could call it a premillennial calendar of future events, because I am going to say what I am saying from the standpoint of premillennialism, but a calendar of future events. We cannot know, in certainty of course, but many things converge to suggest that the prophetic count down may have already begun. For example, just think about these things. The Bible says that Israel as a nation was to be destroyed. God prophesied through Moses that fact, and in Deuteronomy chapter 28, and verse 63 through verse 68, he gave the details. Let me just read them.

"And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to naught; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and

thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! For the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you."

Now, that great prophecy that was given through Moses many, many years ago has been fulfilled. Israel was destroyed as a nation. Then also the prophet Hosea prophesied of the times that would intervene between the time that they were destroyed, and the time when they would be regathered. In the 3rd chapter of the prophecy of Hosea, speaking of this particular time, the prophet writes, "And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. For," and this is the important verse, Hosea chapter 3 in verse 4, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim."

Now, that has been going on for many, many years. Israel has been abiding without a kingdom, without a prince, as he says, without sacrifice. Their sacrificial system has been destroyed, because they do not possess the city of Jerusalem and the place of sacrifice, the dome of the rock, where the mosque of Omar is, evidently. And furthermore, he says they are without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. So that the priesthood that Israel was given is also gone. So, at the present time, they are idolaters, but at the same time they do not have a kingdom, they do not have a priesthood, they do not have sacrifice. That prophecy is being fulfilled at the present time.

And then also in the future, Israel is said to return to the land. In Deuteronomy chapter 32, in verse 43, to give one example, we read, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." In Leviticus chapter 26, in a parallel prophecy, Moses writes of the fact that in the future the time is coming when the nations shall even confess their iniquity. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass," notice it's singular, "which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."

So, here is a remarkable series of prophecies in the Bible. It is prophesied that Israel, as a nation, shall be destroyed. It is prophesied that they shall have a period of distress in which they are scattered to the four corners of the earth. They do not have a kingdom. They do not have a priesthood. There is no prince of Israel, as the Old Testament has prophesied. But here it is predicted that they will have their land remembered by the Lord, and he will show mercy to them. And the one thing that is hindering the fulfillment of the prophecies is, "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me." Other Scriptures such as Zachariah chapter 12, in verse 10 make it plain that ultimately, the trespass about which he is speaking is the crucifixion of the Messiah, who was crucified by the nation Israel, and also the Gentiles, now almost two thousand years ago.

On May 14, 1948, as we all know, Israel became a nation again, after hundreds of years destroyed as a nation; they have become a nation again. The rebirth of Israel, maybe, we can only say maybe, I think, maybe the count down is beginning. It may be that in the program of God that signals that we are in the last days. We cannot be sure, it

is entirely possible, of course, that Israel should be driven off the land, and then come back. But the Scriptures make it plain that they are coming back, and the Scriptures also make it plain that they shall come back in unbelief. And that, of course, is what they have done. They have come back to the land in unbelief.

The Bible goes on to prophecy, and we shall talk about this later, of how the Messiah shall come, and the nation shall be born again in a day. But in unbelief, they are back there. And all Bible students, while they may be naturally somewhat disturbed by the sensational statements that are made by some teachers, should nevertheless study the Scriptures with a great deal of anticipation and earnest need, because it just may well be that we are living in the last days. When we talk about Bible prophecy, and that's what we're talking about now, for tonight and next week probably, it's important to remember these things.

First, the impossibility of human prophet. Now, of course, I know you have no need for illustration of that. You have seen preachers who try to prophecy games of football and do not have success. I must admit that it evidently shows that I am a false prophet after all. [Laughter] However, I want you to know, now some of you weren't here Sunday night, and I was wounded further in the house of my friends, because one of the men got up in the meeting and made a comment about the fact that my prophecy had not come true. He was do certain that it was not coming true, that he said that in the meeting, though he had only seen a little of the first quarter of the game. And when the score got to fourteen to nothing, he just knew that Dr. Johnson was wrong. And so, he went out on a limb and said that it was obvious that the gift of prophecy had come to an end. Well, at least that's something to be gained from my false prophesying. We have come to a biblical truth. The gift of prophecy is no more.

Now, there are some other things that could be said about that, however, and the latest information is that the people in the tape room are really interested to know my prophecies. And some of the men there have said they want to know what I prophesy

about games in the future, because they want to put their money at the opposite end [laughter] of my prophesying. Because it so happens that I've prophesied, I think, two times already, and I have lost both of them. Those events just did not come to pass as they were supposed to. But now my friends are anxious to hear what I'm going to say, and I think I'm going to, with Jimmy the Greek, charge for my prophecies in the future, [laughter] in order to comfort me for the fact that I have been the butt of so many comments in the last few days. One man came up Sunday night and said that "I will never follow you again." [Laughter] Well, anyway there is a famous Chinese proverb, I've mentioned it several times, that prophesying is very difficult, especially with regard to the future. [Laughter]

So, it is impossible for human beings to prophecy. We know that. Isaiah in the 41st chapter of his prophecy speaks about that, for he speaks of the divine prophecy. The Lord says,

"Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of naught: an abomination is he that chooseth you."

So, human prophecy is impossible. There is another thing that we need to remember, and I think that this particularly important for students of biblical prophecy. That is, the weakness of human understanding of prophecy. We cannot prophecy the future, but God has given us some insight into the future. Unfortunately, however, when we study the prophetic word we must interpret it. And we need to remember that we do

not always interpret the word without making mistakes, even though the word itself is true. When the interpretations are given, our interpretations are only human interpretations, remember. There are some prophecies in which the divine interpretation is given with the prophecy. That interpretation is correct, but when we seek to interpret that interpretation, we are inclined to make errors. And so, in the study of the word, we should remember that.

Just to give you an illustration of this, it was very improbably, and in fact turned out to be that way, that a person who had only the Old Testament would be able to pinpoint all of the aspects of our Lord's first coming. Just for example remember this, in the Old Testament there was a prophecy in the Book of Isaiah which had to do with the first coming of our Lord, which read like this, I'll read it, "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." And in a few moments, after that we read, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." So, here is a prophecy of the first coming of the Lord Jesus. In fact, in the Book of Matthew, that text is singled out as having been fulfilled in the first coming of our Lord. It had to do with Galilee of the nations. His ministry in Galilee was said to be fulfilled, this prophecy here, in the ministry that he had in Galilee.

Now, also in the prophet Micah, however, we read, "But thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." So, here is a prophecy that says that the Messiah shall be identified with Galilee of the nations, and another prophecy that says that he shall come out of Bethlehem of Judea. Now, it would have taken a great deal of prophetic insight for

someone to have realized, studying the prophecies, perhaps it was possible for a man of very unusual commitment to the word of God to realize that he would be from Galilee, but actually be born in Bethlehem, just because his parents happened to be there at that particular time. You surely would have thought if you had read the prophecy in Isaiah, he will be a Galilean, and he will be born in Galilee. Or if you read the prophecy in Micah you have said, well, he will be from Judah, because he's to be king of Judah, and he will be born in Bethlehem of Judea. So, you can see how, if they had denominations before our Lord came, there would be the denomination of the Galileans and the denomination of the Judaites, debating over where the Messiah was to be born. And perhaps even from where he should come. So, you see, it's not easy to put all of the prophetic pieces together. And unfortunately, human beings not only do not prophesy, but they also are weak in their interpretation of prophecy.

But nevertheless, in spite of all of this, it is necessary to study the prophetic word, and the prophetic word is very useful, as it is given to us. So, the fact that it is difficult to interpret. The fact that we cannot prophesy of ourselves, should not mean that we should not really give ourselves to the study of the prophetic word. I wish that every one in this room was really a student of the prophetic word. I know that your spiritual life would be improved thereby. Let me illustrate, that even thou we may not have all the facts of the prophetic word set out for us in perfect harmony yet, nevertheless the Scriptures are of great usefulness to us as we seek to interpret the prophetic word. Take those men who carried out some of the great explorations that uncovered, for example, this particular continent. Have you ever seen the maps that they went by? Or have you ever looked at some of the maps made in medieval times? If you looked at the maps made in medieval times, parts of the country with which we are familiar now, you would say, "How is the world did they ever find anything?" They didn't have much information, but do you know that it was with those inadequate maps that they were able to make the great discoveries? It's only as the years have unfolded, as further explorations have been made, that the

details have been filled in. You'll see some of those old maps that over on the side there'll be devils over here, reptiles over here, and things like that. But nevertheless the less they were useful. So, the prophetic word, even though we may not understand all of it, is very useful for us in our spiritual life.

Well, having said all of these things, away we go now to the future and think about the calendar of future events. And let me say now, first of all, a few words concerning the course of this age in which we are a part. Prophetically, three aspects of this age are important, and the first is suggested to us by the great prophecy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 16, verse 18, passage that we have looked upon in our previous studies of basic Bible doctrine. It's in this passage that the Lord Jesus, when he came to Caesarea Philippi at a certain point in his ministry, asked the disciples who were with him, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" And they said to him, "Some say that you are John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And then our Lord, like the true preacher that he was said, "But who say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter spoke up, he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord Jesus answered and said unto Peter, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." In other words, this was by divine revelation, "And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Now, that is the first aspect of the course of this present age that we should notice. It is the age of the building of the church. From the divine standpoint, that is what the Lord Jesus Christ is doing in the present age. He is building the church.

Now, the church is being built through the preaching of the word of God, we are told in other places. But he is building the church, so that characteristic of the present age is the building of the church. Now, in order to do that, there must be that preaching of the word. And so, that really is the second aspect of the present age that we need to notice. And I'll just call it, for the sake of a term, the growth of Christendom, and ask

you, if you will, to turn to Matthew chapter 13, turn back a few pages to the greatest of the chapters on the parables in the synoptic gospels, Matthew chapter 13, in verse 24 through verse 30. In this particular section we have our Lord's parable of the tares among the wheat. And let me read beginning in verse 24 through verse 30,

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Now, that's the parable. In verse 36 through verse 43, he interprets it. Here though, we have to interpret the interpretation. And our interpretation of interpretations is not always accurate, but we can at least say this is so, our Lord's interpretation. Notice what we read in verse 36, "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field." Now, that is one time when I could really identify with the disciples, because that is what I would have said, too. Explain what you've been talking about. "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;" that's one point. "The field is the world; that's another point. Incidentally, that means that all missions is foreign mission. In fact, there is no such thing as foreign missionary endeavor as over

against home missionary endeavor, biblically. "The field is the world," and that includes Dallas on to the four corners of the earth.

When people speak about foreign missions or home missions, that's a human addition, all missions are just missions to the world "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Now, you can see from this parable that there is another feature of the present age that our Lord lays great stress upon. It is not so much the building of the church, although that is here, as it is the fact that in the Christendom, which is the characteristic of this age. In Christendom, there is going to be a growth of tares as well. And in fact, it is impossible to tell the tares from the wheat, they look so much alike. He says at the end of the age is a time for rooting them out. So, when he comes at his second coming before the kingdom, the tares shall be taken off for judgment. The righteous shall enter into the kingdom that follows.

Now, we needn't talk about that, the thing I want you to notice particularly is this, that in the present day our Lord has already prophesied that there would be the building of the church, the true believers, and also a growth of professing believers who are really sons of the wicked one. That's characteristic of this age too, so we should not be surprised that we growing side by side, a vast work of the Lord God, and also a vast work of the wicked one. And they grow together throughout this age. So, characteristic of this age is the building up of the church. Characteristic also of this age is the growth of

apostasy within that church. In fact, it's just impossible to tell the difference until the end of the age, in many cases.

And surely, as you look about you today, you can see many, many illustrations of this. There are men in Christian church, professing Christian churches, who come into the auditoriums on Sunday morning, they sit down, the time comes for the invocation. The invocation is given, the Scriptures are read, the same Bible is opened up, texts from that Bible is taken, but the fundamentals of the faith are omitted; some more, some less. Some are blatantly opposed to Scripture, because their audience is inured to it. Others' are much more subtle, and the counterfeit is much more difficult to determine. But nevertheless, there they are, the wheat and the tares, growing together until the time of the harvest.

There is one final thing, and it's related to both of these, which we should mention, and that is simply the growth of apostasy. The Apostle Paul tells us something about this in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 13, just to pick out one passage. Most of the apostles mention this. Peter mentions it. John mentions it. Paul mentions it as well, but let's read 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 13. In this case we have something that is not simply doctrinal apostasy, but we have moral apostasy as well. 2 Timothy chapter 3, in verse 13 reads this way, "But evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Now, I would like to give you an illustration of something of this, and how this has penetrated the very top of the professing Christian church. A few years ago there was a meeting of the World Council of Churches at a place in Africa. It was a very important meeting, and I have a report of what is going to take place there. And among the things that took place there were, well they were to gather and discuss things like liberation. The theme was something like "Jesus Christ Liberates and Unites." An evangelical who was very prominent in this pointed out some, made a theological analysis of this, and among some of the things that were said in an article in *Christianity Today* were these.

He said, "The time has come to put the edge of sharp theological analysis to the religious portrait produced at Geneva and related places. What kind of liberation? What sort of unity? Precisely what experience is referred to?" He goes on to talk about doctrine and experience and points out that it is doctrine that must authorize experience. And we cannot talk about a true experience if we do not have proper doctrine, and at the same time, every experience must realize itself and give evidence to doctrine.

He went on to say that the authority of Scripture must come to prevail again. "Although, mentioned in the World Council of Churches creed," he says, "it has had little prominence in recent years. Liberation, for example, is a good term with biblical content if we understand it to mean release of the suppressed, as shown in Isaiah 58, but not if it means violent self-emancipation as a Christian commission. That is, as political violent self-emancipation. It is unbiblical if it means the unity of mankind without conversion and discipleship to Christ. We need," he says, "to come back to the primary theme. We have had enough of horizontal theology, and we need to go back to vertical theology, in which we look upward rather than towards other men about us."

Some of the teaching of the World Council of Churches at this meeting was to the effect that the gorillas that were operative throughout the face of the earth, even though they had no real Christian convictions whatsoever, were to be, their sacrifices had the same character as the sacrifice of Christ's blood and flesh. And at the meeting of the Eucharist, they were to be remembered just as much as Jesus Christ was to be remembered; this, mind you, by the representatives of the World Council of Churches. Now, that is apostasy. That is apostasy in the largest professing body of Christians, I presume, that there is, the World Council of Churches. So, when we read that the men shall become worse and worse, deceiving others, and being deceived, that prophecy has a measure of fulfillment already.

Now, I also have before me an article that was written concerning the gay church, and the gay church, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is a

gay church group formed by a certain man, formerly an ordained Pentecostal minister. In less than six years, this was a few years ago, and again another article in *Christianity Today*, in less than six years it has come to have more than thirty-nine chartered congregations and forty-three missions and study-groups with a combined membership of more than seventeen thousand people. When the apostle says, "Evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," he was not fooling at all. So, the present age then is the age of the building of the church, the true church, through the preaching of the gospel. It is the age of the growth of Christendom, and it is also the age of the growth of apostasy, and we should not be surprised at any of these three things.

Now, the second thing that is important is the next event on the prophetic calendar. Now, you know, of course, that we have at the present time all over the western world, where the Bible is studied very intensively, debate going on over the next event in the prophetic word, in the prophetic program. It's my own personal opinion, although I respect very much the things that some of my friends say, some of my close friends, but nevertheless I still feel that they have not proved to me the next event is not the coming of our Lord for the church. A week or two or go, Martha and I were in Chicago at a meeting of the Mid-winter Ministerial of the Evangelical Free Church of the United States. I had been asked to speak; it was gathered around the theme of prophecy. That's why we didn't meet that Tuesday night, because on Tuesday and Wednesday of the week. I was speaking to this group of several hundred ministers from all over the country.

And on the first day that we arrived there was a panel, and the discussion was the rapture of the church. One young member of the faculty, a very fine young man, took the post-tribulational position; that is that the church was going through the tribulation. Paul Feinberg, the son of Dr. Charles Feinberg, who many of you know is a Jewish Christian, Paul took the position of the pretribulational rapture. He's on the faculty of the

institution also. And then another member of the faculty took the mid-tribulation rapture viewpoint. So, for about two or three hours they debated the point, each first giving a statement and then answering the statement of others. And then it was opened up for some questions from the floor. There are problems, speaking perfectly honestly, with all of these views. But, like my friend that I mentioned not too long ago, I think that I'll still say with the problems of the pre-trib rapture than the problems of the post or mid-trib rapture viewpoints. And so, for me, I'm looking for the Lord Jesus Christ to come at any moment, and of course I hope that he comes soon, and I look for him to come at any moment. That happens to be my own personal view point.

Now, I think that that is what Paul refers to in 1 Thessalonians 4, although I don't think this is an argument for that view point. This is rather, a description of the rapture of the church, something that both post-tribulationists and pretribulationists would agree on. They would only speak of it as occurring at a later time. This is what Paul says in! Thessalonians chapter 4, he first talks about the resurrection of the church, he says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," I wouldn't mind being one of the evangelical brethren, or one of the evangelical and united brethren, or one of the Plymouth brethren, but I don't want to be one of the ignorant brethren. [Laughter] Paul says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

Evidently, the apostle had preached in Thessalonica and after he had gone, some of the Christians had died. They had been told about this hope, and so the question naturally arose, "Well, if they have died since Paul was here, will they miss the rapture, because they have died? Will they participate?" This is written to answer that question. He will point out, "No, they won't miss the rapture, as a matter of fact, they'll be raised first." And there shall be a union of both those who are alive, and those who have died. Listen to what he goes on to say, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by

the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep."

In other words, to answer their question, well no, they shall not miss the rapture. As a matter of fact, we shall not precede them, "For," he goes on to say, verse 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." You see, not only shall we not precede them, but they will be resurrected first. So, those who are in the grave who have died, shall be given their resurrection bodies first, and they shall come forth from the graves. Their spirits have come with the Lord, and their bodies are raised, and their spirits rejoin their resurrection bodies.

Then Paul speaks of the living. He says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." In other words, as the spirits of those who have come with the Lord rejoin the bodies raised, made like unto our Lord's own glorious body, we who are alive when the Lord comes, we're going to be caught up with them. They're going to precede us in resurrection. They shall rise first. But they're not going to be taken to the Lord's presence apart from the rest of us, and so together we will catch up. We will be raptured, that's the word from which we get "of the rapture," the great snatch as someone has called it. So, we shall be caught up together with them. Well, the question would naturally arise. Well Paul, yes that does comfort us a lot. Those who have died are not going to miss that rapture, but it doesn't say anything about our resurrection body here, it just says we're going to be caught up. What about our resurrection body?

Well now, that's a question that the Thessalonians apparently understood, but the Corinthians did not understand that. So, writing to the Corinthians in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, he adds that point. That is, he talks in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 about the resurrection of the living. Listen to what he says in verse 51 of 1 Corinthians 15, "Behold,

I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Now, those that were dead are caught up and given a resurrection body, they are changed. They are given a resurrection body. We shall be changed, too. All shall be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" at the last trump. For "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." That's what he spoke about in 1 Thessalonians 4, given a new resurrection body, and we shall be changed. That is, this old body that we have now is going to be changed into a resurrection body, too. "For," he says to explain, "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.

So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave where is thy victory. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." So we have the resurrection of the church, and here we have resurrection of the living. The dead are given resurrection bodies, raised first. The living have their bodies changed, they are caught up with the others. And together they meet the Lord in the air.

There was a popular radio commentator who used to like to introduce the death of some important person with the phrase, "And as all of us must eventually experience, so death today has taken such and such a person." Well, his theology was rather weak. Death, you see, does not take everybody. Not only in the rare instances in the Old Testament, but there is a whole generation to come, that shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Now, Paul said, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." There will be a reunion, and as they return with our Lord to heaven, they shall return home. That's where home really is. Our citizenship is in heaven.

Now there, the next event, evidently, that takes place is the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. And we have just about a minute. Let me just read the section, and we will continue and conclude our calendar next week, the Lord willing. Notice 2 Corinthians

chapter 5, and verse 9 and verse 10, after we have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, or our brethren who have died are resurrected meet us, and together we meet the Lord, we don't have indication of a delay in time. We assume that the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, shall take place shortly. We have no Scripture to say that, it's just an inference, so you must take it only as an inference that I suggest to you. He says, "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we," that is we believers, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he which hath done, whether it be good or worthless." That word means worthless. It does not seem to me that this kind of reward is a penalty. If we have done something that is displeasing to the Lord we shall not be penalized, but we shall not receive a reward. So, whether it's good, if it's good we receive a reward; if it's worthless, it's worthless. We don't receive anything for that. So, the judgment seat of Christ takes place then.

Now, I want to conclude by just pointing out this, that even unbelievers recognize the possibility of the fulfillment of the prophecies of the word of God, how much more ought we? Major General Chaim Herzog, Israeli Ambassador to the UN, said just three years ago, "Every where you turn in Israel today, the Bible is coming to life. I'm not talking only about archeological discoveries, but about the international political scene as it affects us today. If you read the biblical prophecies about Armageddon, and the end days, and you look at the current realities in the world, and especially in the Middle East, things certainly begin to look familiar. The vast number of archeological discoveries in Israel have all tended to vindicate the pictures that are presented in the Bible. If therefore, the Bible has been proven true concerning the past, we cannot look lightly at any prognostication it makes about the future." How important it is for us to be ready for the future, believer or unbeliever.

John Lennon was slain just a few weeks ago. One saying of his that was reported by the media constantly was the saying which he had made just a few months or weeks

before his death, "I'm only forty, God willing I have forty more years of productivity left."
Little did he know he had not even a year left. He was slain at age forty. We do not
know the future. How important it is that we pay attention to what God says in the word.
Let's bow in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the light that Thou dost give us from
the word of God. We know there are many things of which we cannot be absolutely
certain. We know that there is a great debate over the imminence of the Lord's return.
We recognize that. We do not speak with dogmatism. But we look for the coming again
of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that great momentous event is to come. And we do
ask, Lord, that we may be anticipating, occupying, waiting for him to come from heaven
who has delivered us from the wrath to come. May that hope burn brightly in us, so
brightly Lord...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]